

Saskatchewan Multicultural Week

November 15-23, 2014

Ways to Welcome

Why Celebrate Saskatchewan Multicultural Week?

Saskatchewan Multicultural Week is celebrated each November the week that includes November 22nd. The Saskatchewan motto is *From Many Peoples Strength*. Forty years ago (in 1974), Saskatchewan was the first province to enact multiculturalism legislation, recognizing the right of every community to retain its identity, language and traditional arts and sciences for the mutual benefit of citizens. In 1997, the Act was revised and a section of the Act states the policy should preserve, strengthen and promote Aboriginal cultures and acknowledge their historic and current contribution to development of Saskatchewan. More information is available on [The Multiculturalism Act](#) of Saskatchewan. Responsibility for the Act resides with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. The Act states broadly the provincial multiculturalism policy and provides the Minister power to carry out the purposes of the Act. *The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCoS) has been instrumental in the development and promotion of these multicultural values.*

From Many Peoples Strength: Past, Present and Future

As we celebrate this 40th anniversary, we take the opportunity to look back at the past, consider the successes and challenges of the present and imagine what we wish for Saskatchewan's multicultural future. Each of us can play a role in continuing cultural traditions, celebrating diversity, recognizing and rejecting racism and building intercultural connections.



Past

Saskatchewan has been home to many indigenous cultural groups from time immemorial, including Cree, Nahkawē, Dene, Nakota, Dakota and Lakota nations. Relationships between these groups included trade, conflict, alliance building and peaceful coexistence. The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre provides good information on First Nations cultures, including history, traditions, languages and current communities at [SICC](#).

The French and British initially arrived as fur traders and contact with indigenous groups began the course for relationships. The Métis culture was born of the interaction between ethnic groups. Treatment of the original people in Saskatchewan was often discriminatory and aimed to provide privileges to those of European origin. The Treaties signed by the sovereign nations continue to provide guidance for the relationships.

The *Dominion Lands Act* of 1872 attracted many and varied Europeans, as well as African Americans. Racist ideas almost saw Parliament deem the latter “unsuitable” for Canada’s climate. Chinese people began to immigrate as labourers for the building of the railways with opposition characterized by the Head Tax. There are many stories of individuals and communities welcoming newcomers and working together, as well as stories of pressure to give up cultural traditions and assimilate.

Following WWII, Canada opened its doors to many displaced by war as well as those from many lands seeking peace, security and economic prospects.

Political and community leaders chose to entrench the best aspects of our heritage of appreciation for the richness from cultural diversity in both the 1974 Saskatchewan Multiculturalism Act and the provincial motto. These trailblazers were followed by other leaders who created the current Act, which continues to strongly proclaim “foster a climate for harmonious relations among people of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds without sacrificing their distinctive cultural and ethnic identities”.

Present

Saskatchewan is currently attracting many newcomers who are drawn by the active economy. The First Nations and Métis populations are growing. Our communities, both large and small are changing in very visible ways. People who are established originate from a variety of ethnic heritages with some very connected to the traditions, beliefs, arts and perspectives and others identifying with the dominant culture.

Many newcomers talk about the friendliness and generosity of people already settled in Saskatchewan. There are also stories of rejection based on accents, difficulty working in previous occupations, differences in expressions of cultural or faith values, rapidly learned negative stereotypes about indigenous people and other challenges.

How does your community create a welcoming atmosphere that respects everyone and sees them for their strengths?

Future

We still have work to do to see the [Act](#) in action! Look at the Multiculturalism Policy in section 4. What do you see going well? What needs work?

What would you like to see? Talk to your family and friends of many backgrounds. What do your visions have in common?

Do you want to build bridges between cultures? How can we make this easier?

We encourage you to practice Saskatchewan’s motto: *From Many Peoples Strength* during Saskatchewan Multicultural Week and every day.

Announcements:

1. For more ideas, or more information, please visit www.mcos.ca.
2. Order your [2015 Multifaith Calendar](#). They make great gifts and prizes that promote multicultural values.
3. [Multicultural Education Initiative](#) grant applications due by October 31st.
4. Watch for news and registration information for Arret/Stop Racism Youth Leadership Workshops which will take place in February in Regina and Saskatoon.



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40th Anniversary [Learn more: mcos.ca](http://www.mcos.ca)

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